

AGENDA ITEM No: 8.

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY/DISTRICT COUNCILS

AT A MEETING OF THE SOCIAL SERVICES LIAISON GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON MONDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2007

PRESENT: Councillor J Jarosz (Chair)

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|-------------|--------------|---|------------------------|
| Councillors | M Harkin | - | WYPTA (to item 8 only) |
| | K Hussain | - | WYPTA (to item 7 only) |
| | C Greaves | - | WYPTA |
| | G Wainwright | - | WYPTA |
| | B Metcalfe | - | Calderdale MBC |

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|--------------------------------|-------------|---|--------------|
| Officers in attendance: | I Smith | - | Kirklees MC |
| | E Guest | - | Bradford MDC |
| | M Pickles | - | Bradford MDC |
| | N Holt | - | Metro |
| | F Whitehead | - | Metro |
| | R Chaplin | - | WYPTA |

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Jennings (WYPTA), A Harrison (Leeds) and C Tennant (Wakefield).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no personal or prejudicial interests declared by members at the meeting.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2007 be approved.

4. METROLOCAL

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress towards the launch of MetroLocal services.

It was noted that pilot MetroLocal services were being developed for implementation later in the year in the Kirklees area and Mount Taxis and TLC Travel had been selected as the operators. Pupils would transfer onto MetroLocal from existing SEN taxi contracts and the services would be managed by Metro alongside the AccessBus service. SEN transport would commence in the autumn term and it was anticipated that the daytime service

would be introduced in December 2007. The capital costs of the pilot scheme would be met by the MyBus capital project and the revenue costs jointly met by Kirklees Council and Metro. It was reported that discussions were ongoing with other District Councils in order to develop the scheme further and a progress report would be prepared for the next meeting of the Liaison Group.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a progress report be prepared for the next meeting of the Liaison Group.

5. 2008 CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on the proposals for a national free scheme for England from April 2008.

Members were advised that the Concessionary Bus Travel Act received Royal Assent in July 2007 and noted the scheme proposals outlined in the report. It was noted that there would be one 'proof of entitlement' pass across England and this would possibly be issued on an ITSO Smartcard which would enable inter-operability between systems and equipment.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

6. FREE CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL APRIL 2006 – SCHEME UPDATE

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on the introduction of the free concessionary travel scheme for men and women over 60 and certain categories of disabled people on 1 April 2006.

Members were advised that the introduction of the free scheme had resulted in a 7% increase in the number of permits issued, with an additional 24,300 issued during 2006/07. Data also showed a 23% increase in the number of journeys made between April 2006 to March 2007 (an additional 8.6 million) and it was expected that the numbers would increase further over the long term.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

7. 2008 CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL DATA CAPTURE

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which provided an update on the collection of data and electronic images in readiness for the launch of the English National Concessions Scheme (ENCS) in April 2008.

The Group were advised of the marketing campaign to encourage people to apply for new passes. The Liaison Group welcomed the publicity campaign and some members in Calderdale had included it in their ward newsletters to ensure people were aware of the new scheme. Comment was made that there were still some people who were confused about their entitlement, especially with regard to cross boundary travel. It was reported that it was expected that all locally registered bus services would be included in the scheme, which included many tourist buses and summer services to local attractions, although there were some issues which were being investigated and required legal clarification before the implementation of the scheme next year.

It was noted that the applications were being validated by Post Offices and bus station travel centres and then scanned by an appointed data bureau in order to build a comprehensive database of images and personal data in accordance with DfT guidelines.

Members were advised that meetings had been held with 'critical friends' and social services departments to discuss the proposals and procedures for capturing data and images for disabled people. It was anticipated that most applications would be processed by mid October 2007 and initial indications were that approximately 110,000 applications had been received for processing to date. The new cards would be issued in March 2008 prior to the introduction of the scheme.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

8. ACCESSBUS PASSENGER STATISTICS AND TRENDS

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the current trends in AccessBus usage.

It was reported that the number of passenger journeys undertaken in the 12 month period up to 31 July 2007 was 516,862, which represented an increase of 0.4% on the previous period. The total number of customers registered to use the service had also increased by 4% over the numbers registered at the end of January 2006.

Members were advised that following the replacement of older buses and a sustained programme to maximise the efficiency of the service, taxi utilisation in 2006/7 had reduced by 30% in comparison with 2005/6.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

9. ACCESSBUS PROGRESS REPORT

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive updating members on issues and initiatives affecting the AccessBus service.

AccessBus Operating Contracts

It was reported that a two year extension of operating contracts had been secured and all five of the existing operators had agreed to continue to provide the service. The continuation to September 2009 would give the opportunity to implement and evaluate the proposed MetroLocal service and allow further consideration to the future repositioning of the AccessBus service.

Replacement AccessBus Vehicles

Members were advised that following delivery of the remaining seven new vehicles all the AccessBus fleet was low floor accessible. It was reported that the original Solo vehicles were entering their eighth year of service and a business case was being prepared to evaluate whether to refurbish and repaint the original vehicles or replace them. Comment was made that the original vehicles were wider than the newer fleet and problems had been encountered on several routes because they were unable to negotiate the narrow roads. It was noted that the cost effectiveness of vehicle refurbishment was at times questionable. This matter would be fully considered in the business evaluation which was ongoing and would be reported to the next meeting of the Liaison Group.

AccessBus Passenger Entitlement

Members noted the document which gave details of when customers were entitled to use AccessBus services and reflected the current practice. With regard to the section on taxi substitution, members welcomed the reference to "licensed hackney carriages and private hire vehicles" rather than "taxis" and asked that this be used on future documentation.

Taxi Services

The Liaison Group noted that where new day and time specific travel requests were made, customers were being advised that they could only be met by the AccessBus service if they could be accommodated on a bus.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.